

Brandi Blue married the pool hustler, had his son, but the pool hustler ran off with the babysitter, and the topless craze got mellow, the Purple Haze only paying \$5 an hour, so Brandi Blue had to work stag parties, model for soft porn, until her silicone went bad and she had to have a mastectomy at age 29.

Brandi Blue became a reborn Christian, had her name legally changed to Brandi Blue, studied real estate, tried to learn to type, went to manicurist school and graduated. Her daughter turned out to be weird and wild, her son dyslexic, and now they rent rooms in her tract home she bought with her topless dancing money.

Brandi Blue had a hard life, all right, but what bums me out the most was me not approving of her frying pork chops topless. It was the happiest time of her life.

A GROOVY KIND OF LOVE

Crazy Fred,
a Registered Sexual Deviate
for homosexuality and Navy- and Nietzsche-macho,
was a gentleman, my Don Quixote, and when
a biker or a pool hustler called me Twiggy,
he yelled at them as loud as he could,
"The meat's always sweeter next to the bone,"

and on slow days when I whined
I only made half the tips the other
sexier and bolder go-go girls did,
Crazy Fred always handed me a dollar,
put his hand on my shoulder, and told me
I was too good for All This,
and would someday marry a prince.

I would never marry a prince,
but on some Sunday afternoons,
Crazy Fred would fatten me up
on to-go steak and lobster dinners,
and some Sunday mornings,
when we were the only ones in Abner's 5,
he'd bring me Dom Perignon we'd sip
from a coffee mug, and Melba toast,

and Beluga caviar we'd spread,
for want of a knife, with the red handle
of my Maybelline mascara brush,

and Crazy Fred,
my Knight of the Crazy Countenance,
would hold up his mug of Dom Perignon,
look up at the windmills of broken
air conditioning in the ceiling,
smile as big as the moon does, and say,
quoting jukebox
rather than Cervantes,

We had a groovy kind of love.

MT. EVEREST

On cold, rainy Southern California days
like this one when I was a kid
and came home from school
my mother'd have all the doors and
windows wide open, airing the house
of her and my father's chain-smoking
and last night's fried chicken,
the wind blowing the criss-cross curtains
into skirts of snow.
I'd put on my slippers and another sweater
and go into the kitchen where my mother
had a stew simmering and a cherry pie
baking in the stove. I'd press my icy
hands and rump up against the oven door
till they nearly cooked, and my rained-on
hair crisped with the smell of cherries.
Today my kids come home and close the doors
and windows I opened, complain that it's
cold in the house, damp from the rain, ask
why don't I turn up the thermostat.
Put on your slippers and another sweater,
I say, but they won't, go on complaining
that I'm not cold like them, me barefoot
with rolled up sleeves, worked up from
rolling pie crust dough for the
cherry pie baking in the oven.
Why aren't you cold, they ask,
and I answer, Because I'm tough.